

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This preliminary amendment is presented to more clearly define the invention over the Ferber reference applied against the claims in the parent application. In particular, the present invention is directed to the utilization of a barcode to identify a customer. In sharp contrast, Ferber utilizes a barcode to identify an e-coupon for redemption purposes. Claim 1 has been revised herein to specify that the barcode is "for identifying the party...". Thus, claim 1 is clearly allowable over Ferber. Analogous amendments have been made to the other independent claims which, therefore, are also allowable over Ferber.

It is respectfully submitted that this application is now in proper condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with the application may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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